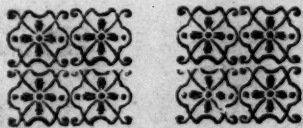


THE
1489. pp 1
NIGHT-PIECE.

A
POEM.

*Then feed on thoughts that voluntary move
Harmonious numbers, as the wakeful bird
Sings darkling, and in shadiest covert hid
Tunes her nocturnal note. —*

MILTON.



LONDON:

Printed for W. HINCHLIFFE, at Dry-
den's Head, under the Royal-Exchange.
MDCCXIX.

THE

NIGHT-PIECE

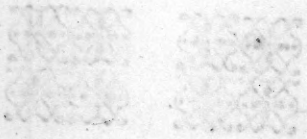
A

P O E M.



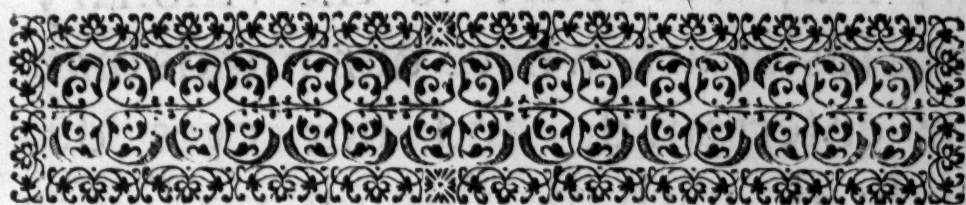
Then fell on thoughts that violent my move
Harmonious numbers, as the warlike din
Sing, darling, and in British covert hid
Tears her western note —

MILTON.



LONDON:

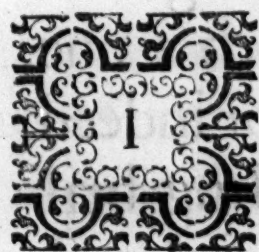
Printed for W. Hinchcliffe, at Dy-
den's Head, under the Royal Exchange.
MDCCLXIX.



T O

WILLIAM ARCHER, Esq;

S I R,



T'S the observation of
a late celebrated writer,
that the viewing pleasant
pictures, is proper to dis-
pel that gloom, which is apt to
hang on the mind in cloudy and
uncomfortable weather; that thus
when all things swim in rain, and

(iv)

nature wears a lowring countenance, we may yet retire to the visionary worlds of art, where our minds may be entertain'd, and our eyes delighted, with the shining prospects of streaming gold, delicious glades, and flowery landskips.

In like manner, I found it was absolutely necessary for me, in my melancholy hours, to fix my thoughts on some curious subject, that might refresh a languishing imagination; but where to find such a one, was somewhat difficult; for indeed, that theme must be exceeding brilliant, which can irradiate a dejected mind, and soften with its glorious colours, the tedious minutes of an uneasy solitude.

After

After the strictest enquiry, I could not find any subject so full of force and vigour, so suitable to my condition, or agreeable to my inclination, as the serious consideration of the divine goodness.

This, and this alone, is the noble source of all that pleasure and felicity which enlivens the creation, and sweetly diffuses it self thro' universal nature: hence spring the reviving slumbers of the labouring peasant; and hence, the blissful raptures of an immortal seraphim.

I have therefore some reason to hope, that this performance, how mean soever in other respects, yet by reason of the dignity and importance

tance of the subject, will meet with a kind reception, from a gentleman whose steady piety, beautiful conversation, and delicate taste of the politer parts of learning, are very distinguishing amidst so great a glitter of figure and fortune.

But I will not be so injurious to so bright a character, as to attempt the drawing it ; it being composed of such finish'd beauties, as require the artful touches of a celebrated master.

Besides, addressees of this kind have been so much perverted, and authors have been frequently so extravagant in describing their patron's virtues, that *dedications* seem now to have lost both their nature
and

and end : so that when the laborious writers have rack'd their inventions to the utmost, and been most profuse of their richest paint, to adorn their dazzling exemplars, the reader is often tempted to consider them only as so many gaudy idols of a luxuriant fancy.

I shall therefore wave the usual method of epistles of this nature, and only humbly take this opportunity, of testifying the grateful sense I retain of those many favours you have been pleas'd to honour me with ; it being impossible I should ever forget those uncommon kindnesses, the genuine fruits of a truly generous mind, most condescending and munificent !

May

May heaven still prevent you
with the choicest of its temporal
blessings, till there shall open a
brighter scene of transport and im-
mortality !

I am,

S I R,

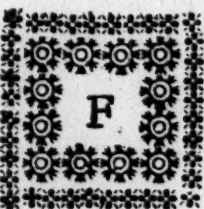
Your much obliged,

and most obedient,

humble servant,

THOMAS FOXTON.

THE
NIGHT-PIECE.

FROM lonely vaults can blooming
Or softness reign amidst tempestuous
From funeral shades can crimson
Or in eternal pains a blasted seraph sing?
How then shall I, with grief and fear oppress,
While raging storms invade my lab'ring breast,
My sorrows lull and charm my cares to rest?
Display cœlestial triumphs, drown'd in tears,
And soil'd with dust, admire the distant stars?

B

For

For when the mind has lost its noblest fire,
The fingers languish on the silver lyre;
The jarring strings, by sympathy, complain,
Raise new distress, and lengthen every pain;
Reluctant notes deny their spritely grace,
And shrillest airs are lost in murm'ring bass.

'Tis joy alone can swell a lofty sound,
And spread the musick and the transport round;
Aloft in air, make balmy numbers float,
And warm the soul at every melting note.

Yet thro' surrounding gloom the muse presumes
To raise her voice, and spread her shining plumes;
To crown, with orient gems, the blackest scene,
And dress the desert in immortal green:
Round mournful tombs her starry beauties play,
Deck sorrow fine, and paint affliction gay.

She

She sings nor dazzling arms, nor *Cyprian* groves,
 Nor vanquish'd tyrants, nor disast'rous loves ;
 No liquid crimson stains the martial plain,
 Nor softer *Venus* spreads her gaudy train.
 Such vulgar subjects with neglect she views,
 And nobler themes, beyond the stars, pursues ;
 Th' eternal King's immense compassion shows,
 Which gilds distress, and sooths the deepest woes :
 Hence desolation takes a pleasing form,
 And angels glitter through the fiercest storm.

This *Syrius* found, in sorrow's dismal night,
 When sickly beams but glimmer'd on his sight ;
 Tho' oft, before, in purple floods they roll'd,
 And charm'd his brilliant eyes with sparkling gold.
 Yet when he view'd unwholesome vapours rise,
 And gathering clouds obscure the low'ring skies ;

His former bliss but swell'd his present grief,
For vanish'd joys afford but small relief:
They rather deeper wound the bleeding heart,
And add new sharpness to the pointed dart.
Thence no relief to drooping *Syrinx* flow'd,
Nor kind supports to ease his heavy load;
But oft, so sad, he trac'd the lonely glade,
He seem'd the Genius of the midnight shade,
So grave his air, so solemn was his mien,
So oft he rov'd around the dusky green:
Large silent drops still rolling down his face,
And flowing tears bedew'd the conscious grass.

Not so the youth appear'd, when fortune smil'd,
Like some fond parent on her darling child:
Then beauty, drest in robes profusely gay,
Shone round his paths, and blest each smiling day,

The NIGHT-PIECE.

5

Diffus'd her triumphs thro' his softest hours,
And deck'd his footsteps with the richest flowers.
These brighter scenes no more refresh his sight,
But sink and die in fading tracts of light,
That plunge in shades, and mingle with the night:
Whose gloomy curtains were so closely drawn,
No lucid streak foretold approaching dawn;
But clouds on clouds still blacker mountains form,
And horror rides upon the sweeping storm.

Young *Syrinx* then his mournful state deplor'd,
Whilst lightnings flash'd, and dreadful thunders
No courteous tree its friendly branches spread,
To keep the tempest from his fainting head.
Still as the meads were moist with evening dew,
His restless passions more tormenting grew,
Which made him rove defenseless and forlorn,
And his grief swell'd with every rising morn.

Vast,

6 *The* NIGHT-PIECE.

Vast, as his former joys, his sorrows roll,
And drive the soft ideas from his soul.

As when bleak *Eurus* disarrays the woods,
And binds in icy chains the gliding floods,
No favourite flower, with all its purple charms,
Cold winter's breast with generous pity warms,
Tho' Sylvan glades a beauteous vesture wore,
Rich, as the shrines where kneeling queens adore,
Yet then disrob'd their graces all resign,
Nor roses bloom nor spotless lillies shine ;
So soon terrestrial pleasures will decay,
And darkness shade the most triumphant day,
Then nor the trumpet, nor the tuneful lyre,
Delight the mind, or kindle soft desire :
No breathing tube, or shrill melodious string,
Can make the soul with wonted vigour spring,
Should fam'd *Corelli* play, or *Nicolini* sing.

Cœlestial

The NIGHT-PIECE.

7

Cœlestial *virtue* only can assuage
The poignant pain, and sooth its fiercest Rage;
Thro' night's dark fields its blazing ensigns spread,
And change the sable to victorious red.

Calm was the night, and *Cynthia* sweetly glow'd
In trembling silver, thro' a fleecy cloud,
When *Syrus* enter'd a sequester'd grove,
The sacred seat of solitude and love.
Aspiring oaks there seem'd to touch the Skies,
While myrtle plants with humbler beauties rise;
Round the deep walks the waving branches twin'd,
And the leaves ruffled with the midnight wind.
There *Syrus* rov'd, and sought the thickest shade,
Where num'rous boughs a fainter checquer made.
Sometimes he listned to a purling brook,
Then on the stars, with fixed eyes, would look;

Sigh'd

Sigh'd to the musick of the whistling woods,
And murmur'd, in deep concert, with the floods.
Such strange effects from piercing sorrows flow !
And such the force of an unbounded woe !

While thus the youth his hapless state bewail'd,
His strength departed, and his spirits fail'd,
Then gently sunk into a silent swoon,
And his eyes strove with the departing moon.
When winged *Mercy* quick deliv'rance brought,
Swift as a sun-beam, or a starting thought ;
Vouchsaf'd him succour in the last distress,
When pressing misery seem'd without redress :
Tho' earth disdains to hear, propitious heaven can

Lo ! beauteous *Ariel* leaves the realms of light,
And 'midst the stars directs his speedy flight ;

The NIGHT-PIECE.

9

Rich was his progress thro' the purpled sky,
Large tracts of light proclaim'd the Seraph nigh,
And fann'd by pleasant gales his golden colours fly.
The constellations with fresh lustre shone,
And yellow glories stain'd the silver moon,
Th' etherial plains glow'd with a finer blue,
And the fields glitter'd in cœlestial dew.
His powerful charms, diffus'd a sweetness round,
The smiling walks with rosie splendor crown'd,
And glide with softest grace o'er all th' enammell'd ^{[ground.}
Such sovereign brightness *Syrius*' spirits rais'd,
And floods of light, the slumbring youth amaz'd;
Fresh ardours beat thro' every vigorous vein,
And ting'd the crimson with a deeper stain.
In silent shades to see such glories roll,
And heav'n descend to chear a fainting soul!

10 *The* NIGHT-PIECE.

The guardian seraph now approach'd the place,
But veil'd the lustre of his god-like face,
Mild was his air, and solemn was his pace.
(Such is th' appearance of some youthful swain,
That thoughtful moves along the silent plain ;
When the still village lies dissolv'd in sleep,
And reverend hermits sacred vigils keep)
Then, with a lovely mein, the youth address'd,
And calm'd the passions of his anxious breast.
His accents flow'd in such melodious strains,
They solac'd grief, and lull'd reluctant pains :
With solemn awe, attentive, *nature* stood,
And sacred silence fill'd the listning wood ;
No sporting gales presum'd to shake the trees,
Or bend the myrtles with the gentlest breeze,
To curl the grass, or tender osiers fan ;
And thus th' indulgent Seraphim began.

‘ From

' From blissful realms of everlasting day,
 ' Where living gems immortal flames display,
 ' Where my great *master's* awful throne does rise,
 ' Too bright the prospect for a seraph's eyes,
 ' Who prostrate falls, with rapture and surprize ;
 ' From Jess'min bowers, and Amarantin shades,
 ' That stretch their glories down the purple meads,
 ' Where numerous ranks of dazzling angels shine,
 ' And golden vines round *Jasper* pillars twine,
 ' I come, to mitigate thy raging grief,
 ' Sooth all thy cares, and bring a sure relief;
 ' So my dread Lord commands, and I adore
 ' His matchless goodness, and eternal power ;
 ' With vast delight, his kind commands fulfil,
 ' And lowly bow before his sovereign will :
 ' And so should'st thou, tho' angry tempests roar,
 ' And foaming billows lash the sounding shore ;

‘Tho’ every joy forsakes thy sickning eyes,
 ‘And palest scenes of piercing horror rise.

‘Know’st thou not this, that man is born to
 ‘Till life’s extinguish’d lamp no more shall burn, ^{[mourn,}
 ‘But all his griefs lie bury’d in his urn?
 ‘As ardent sparks from crackling flames arise,
 ‘Affliction springs, and transient pleasure dies;
 ‘His brightest beauties in a moment fade,
 ‘Like morning spangles in a flowery glade:
 ‘No Potent monarch can exemption plead,
 ‘Nor starry crowns protect the Princely head;
 ‘O’er golden beds *vexation* spreads her wings,
 ‘And racks the spirits of despairing kings;
 ‘Thro’ stoutest guards pursues the royal prey,
 ‘And darts its terrors in the face of day.
 ‘The harmless shepherd on the lonely plain,
 ‘Oft sighs for grief, and burns with raging pain,

‘The

‘ The softest charms can’t lull his soul to rest,
‘ Nor rural music sooth his anxious breast,
‘ Tho’ all the scene in yellow beauty glows,
‘ Tho’ fragrant cowslips edge the Sylvan rose,
‘ And poppy garlands whisper soft repose ;
‘ The chrystal streams’ with gentlest murmurs glide,
‘ And rival birds in songs exert their pride :
‘ Pensive, and pale, in secret shades, he mourns
‘ Departed joys, and bliss that ne’er returns.

‘ Had’st thou been made, like active cherubs
‘ Of sacred fire, and pure ethereal light, [bright,
‘ Thy joyful hours perpetual bliss had crown’d,
‘ And transport flow’d in one perpetual round.
‘ But since thou ’rt form’d of earth’s inferiour clay,
‘ Thick mists will rise to cloud thy dubious way ;
‘ Thy withering pleasures fade, and every sweet decay.

‘ Did’st

14 *The NIGHT-PIECE.*

‘ Did’st thou behold what crouds of orphans weep,
‘ And shipwreck’d sailors tremble on the deep,
‘ How helpless prisoners pine beneath their chains,
‘ Which rack their Souls, and tear their bleeding
[veins ;
‘ Sure, in so great a grief, thoud’st lose thy own,
‘ And drown thy softer sighs amidst a general groan.

‘ Nor hence conclude, since grief extends its reign
‘ O’er shining thrones, and every humbler plain,
‘ Thy sovereign Lord defective in his love,
‘ Nor with thy murmurs stain the conscious grove.
‘ Shall mortal man at providence repine ?
‘ Or feeble worms arraign the power divine ?
‘ The fading offspring of the mouldring clay ;
‘ Who thro’ their nostrils breath their lives away ;
‘ Shall such with heaven’s eternal King dispute ?
‘ At whose dread voice, the tallest seraph’s mute !

‘ Whose

‘ Whose matchless power, and most indulgent
[sway,

‘ Harmonious worlds with glad consent obey !

‘ To his great praise revolving planets roll !

‘ And endless glories deck the starry pole !

‘ With every dawn returning bounty springs !

‘ And mercy glitters on the morning’s wings !

‘ It shines in sun-beams round the spacious skies ;

‘ Bright are the figures to the dimmest eyes.

‘ The fruitful lawns *his* boundless love display,

‘ Who made the grass so green, and every flower so
[gay.

‘ Yet such vast love, which happy angels charms,

‘ And round the wide creation throws its arms,

‘ Distress, and pain, and sharp affliction sends

‘ To choicest favorites, and the dearest friends ;

‘ To try their faith, and all their powers refine,

‘ While passive virtues still triumphant shine.

‘ In

[snow ;

[adore,

Manas-

' *Manasseh* thus, when flush'd with royal pride,
 ' His sovereign Lord and father's God defy'd,
 ' Thro' all the land diffus'd a crimson stain,
 ' Which mark'd with horror his abandon'd reign.
 ' Curs'd *Baal's* altars he again restor'd,
 ' And *Molock's* shrines with impious zeal ador'd ;
 ' In barb'rous clangors drown'd his children's cries,
 ' While bloody trumpets pierc'd the distant skies.
 ' Such monstrous crimes soon undermin'd his throne,
 ' And swift, like tempests, drove his glories down.
 ' Then, deep in dust, his princely ensigns roll'd,
 ' With all the beauties of imperial gold ;
 ' 'Midst dismal shades, and heavy chains he pin'd ;
 ' And piercing anguish rack'd his woful mind.
 ' Those mournful hours, by fate in fables dress'd,
 ' With sacred light inspir'd the captive's breast.
 ' He now no more heavens spangled host adores,
 ' Nor offers incense to the starry powers,

18 *The* NIGHT-PIECE.

‘ (Whose feeble flames no chearful light display,
 ‘ Nor thro’ the gloom diffuse one spritely ray,
 ‘ To gild the prison where the monarch lies,
 ‘ With bleeding spirits, and with showery eyes.)
 ‘ But humbly prostrate, worship’d injur’d love,
 ‘ And turn’d the dungeon to a sacred grove ;
 ‘ Whence humblest vows, and ardent wishes rise,
 ‘ And pious mournings penetrate the skies.
 ‘ Then *mercy* warm’d him with its gentlest beams,
 ‘ And chear’d his soul when lab’ring in extreams.
 ‘ Tho’ curs’d by heaven when blazing on a throne,
 ‘ (A blasted wretch beneath a dazzling crown !)
 ‘ Yet when in darkness, sorrow, chains, and tears,
 ‘ Coelestial *grace*, swift to his aid appears,
 ‘ And shows a train of well distinguish’d years.

‘ Thus *Babylon*’s proud king, when forc’d to stray,
 ‘ Like some wild salvage, round a desert way ;

‘ Resign’d

‘ Refign’d his pride, and sunk his waving plumes,
 ‘ Which swell’d unbounded in his royal rooms.

‘ O blissful grief that does the soul reform !

‘ And wakes young flowers amidst the piercing
 [storm.

‘ Which renders void the *Syren*’s tempting charms,

‘ And drives the youth from *Chloe*’s wanton arms ;

‘ Which warms the hardest breast with generous
 [love,

‘ And makes the bowels of the cruel move,

‘ Till the fierce tyger softens to a dove.

‘ Yet, lest the flesh should too impatient grow,

‘ And sink beneath perpetual storms of woe ;

‘ Lest, by continual agonies oppress’d,

‘ Their souls despair to taste the joys of rest ;

‘ Almighty *grace* vouchsafes its powerful aid,

‘ And spreads a lustre round the dreary shade :

‘ Then swift as gloom before the morning flies ;

‘ Their sorrows vanish and their anguish dies.

20 *The NIGHT-PIECE.*

' As pleasures fade, afflictions will decay,
 ' Like tranſient floods that quickly glide away.
 ' Nor will this ſtate admit of ſettled woe,
 ' That, fate reſerves for diſmal ſhades below.
 ' There black *deſpair* in full dominion reigns,
 ' And ſpreads her ſable wings o'er all th' infernal
 [plains.
 ' But here on earth alternate ſcenes ſtill riſe,
 ' And rainbow-like aſſume a thouſand dyes.
 ' The mourning vagrant, deſtitute of food,
 ' That ſlowly wanders in the lonely wood,
 ' By ſudden turns, may be advanc'd on high,
 ' And in renown with ſoverign princes vye.
 ' Then, with delight, he'll run his dangers o'er,
 ' When ſafe from ſtorms, he's reach'd the peaceful
 [ſhore;
 ' The threatning waves ſhall trouble him no more. }

 ' Rouse *Syrins* then, thy drooping ſpirits raiſe,
 ' No more lament, but love, adore, and praiſe
 ' That

The NIGHT-PIECE.

21

‘ That gracious Lord, who oft has been so kind,
‘ And pour’d his balm into thy bleeding mind.
‘ Who all thy wants with tenderest care redrest;
‘ And by a thousand ways, his boundless love express.
‘ How oft, by his commands, have I withstood
‘ Impending fate, when rushing like a flood?
‘ Drove back the waves which would have wrought
‘ And with my wings dispers’d the gathering [thy doom,
[gloom?

‘ Consider well, thy sins have call’d for wrath,
‘ And thy bold crimes demanded speedy death,
‘ Vindictive lightnings then were coming down,
‘ And awful thunder murmur’d to be gone;
‘ But *mercy* swifter to deliverance flies,
‘ Joy of the earth! and beauty of the skies!
‘ That sovereign *mercy* does thy soul invite,
‘ To purest pleasures, and refin’d delight,

‘ To

‘ To joys eternal, free from all allay,
‘ And living springs that never can decay,
‘ To blissful walks of ever-flow’ring greens,
‘ Where glory rises in a thousand scenes,
‘ Where liquid gold in beauteous currents flows,
‘ And heavenly pearl on silver branches glows,
‘ Where raptur’d seraphs sing around the throne,
‘ And God himself inspires the lofty tune.

F I N I S.



